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**Report to  
The Vermont Legislature**

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**Deaths and Hospice Care Report  
2021 Report to the Legislature**

**In Accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 5208.**

**Submitted to:** House Committee on Human Services and House Committee on Health Care  
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

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## Deaths and Hospice Care Report 2021 Report to the Legislature

### Legislative Charge

In accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 5208, the Vermont Department of Health prepared this report summarizing the following:

- Number of persons who died during the preceding two calendar years in hospital emergency rooms, other hospital settings, in their own homes, in a nursing home, in a hospice facility, and in any other setting for which information is available;
- Number of decedents that received hospice care within the last 30 days of their life;
- Number of persons who died in hospital intensive care units, assisted living facilities, or residential care homes during the preceding two calendar years.

### Place of Death Statistics

This report utilizes information from Vermont death certificates. In the 10-year period of 2011-2020, an average of 6,100 deaths occurred in Vermont each year. For the time period of this report (2019-2020) 11,834 deaths occurred in Vermont, 5,657 in 2019 and 6,177 in 2020. Seventy-three percent of deaths occurred outside of a hospital setting and 27% occurred in a hospital setting.

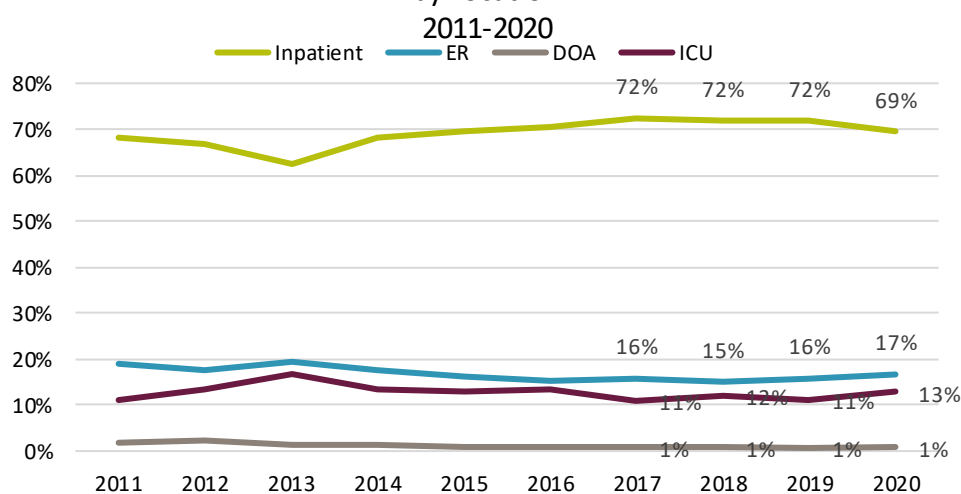
Approximately 1,600 Vermont deaths occur each year in a hospital. In both 2019 and 2020, about seven in ten (70%) deaths that occurred in the hospital were in the inpatient setting. This translates to more than 1,100 deaths each year (Table 1).

The proportion of in-hospital deaths that occur in the inpatient and emergency room settings have decreased slightly over time, while those in the intensive care units have increased and now make up 13% of in-hospital deaths (Figure 1).

**Table 1: Vermont Deaths Occurring in a Hospital Setting**

	Inpatient	Emergency Room	Dead on Arrival	Intensive Care	Unknown	Total
2019	1,168	259	11	183	6	1,627
2020	1,098	267	12	203	1	1,581
Total	2,266	526	23	386	7	3,208

Figure 1: Vermont Deaths in a Hospital Setting  
by Location



More than 4,000 deaths in Vermont occur outside of the hospital each year, with about 85% of these in either the decedent's home, a nursing home, or long-term care facility. In 2019, 1,900 deaths occurred in the decedent's home. In 2020, this increased to more than 2,300. In both years, an additional 1,500 happened in nursing homes or long-term care facilities (Table 2).

Over time, the proportion of out-of-hospital deaths that occur in the decedent's home has increased. After several years of relatively slow change, the percentage increased from 47% in 2019 to 51% in 2020. During this same time period, deaths in a nursing home or long-term care facility have decreased. Again, after a period of slow change the proportion decreased more from 2019 (38%) to 2020 (34%). Deaths in a hospice facility remain small in number, 346 in 2020, but now comprise 8% of out-of-hospital deaths compared with 3% in 2011 (Figure 2).

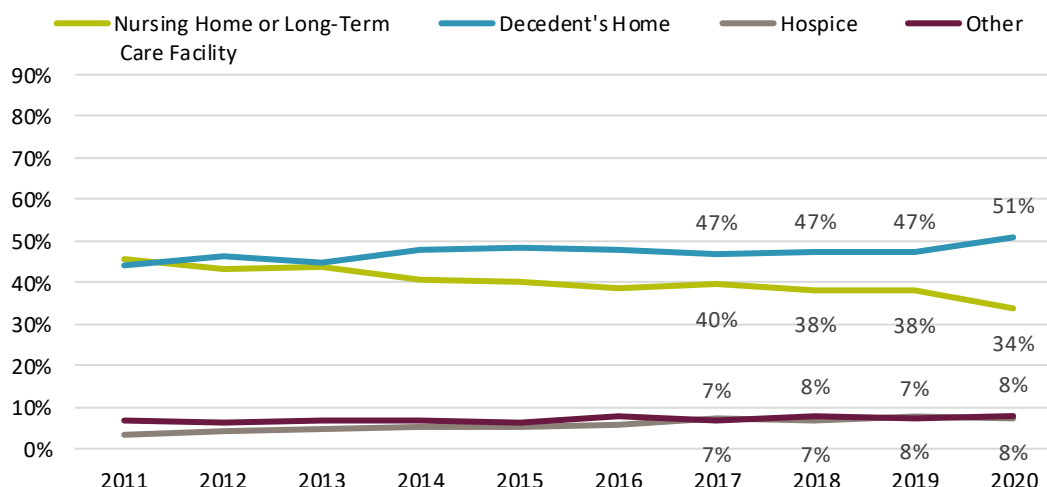
**Table 2: Vermont Deaths Occurring Outside of a Hospital**

	Decedent's Home	Nursing home or Long-Term Care Facility <sup>1</sup>	Hospice Facility	Other <sup>2</sup>	Unknown	Total
2019	1,900	1,532	312	284	2	4,030
2020	2,336	1,551	346	361	2	4,596
Total	4,236	3,083	658	645	4	8,626

<sup>1</sup>Includes nursing homes, assisted living facilities and residential care homes licensed by the State of Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living.

<sup>2</sup>May include deaths that should have been reported under one of the other categories.

Figure 2: Out of Hospital Deaths  
by Location  
Vermont Deaths, 2011-2020



Of the deaths that occur in a nursing home or long-term care facility, more occur in nursing homes and fewer happen in assisted living facilities or residential care homes (Table 3).

**Table 3: Deaths Occurring in a Nursing Home or Long-Term Care Facility<sup>3</sup>**

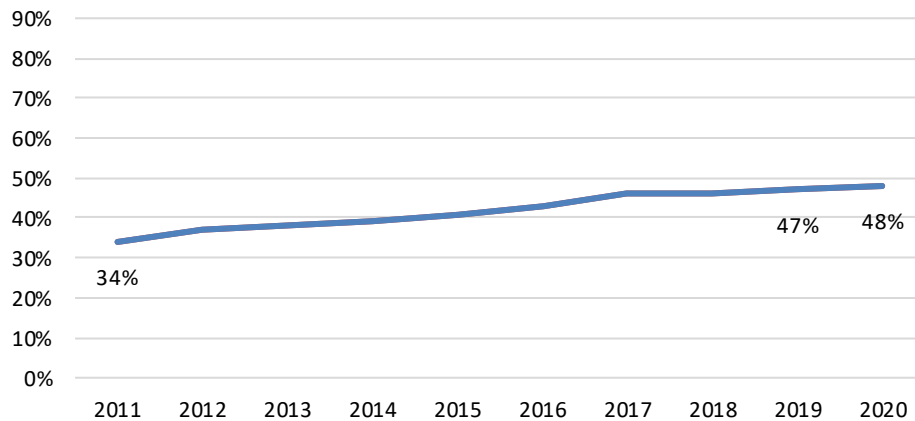
	Nursing Home	Assisted Living Facility	Residential Care Home	Total
2019	1,135	137	260	1,532
2020	1,130	153	268	1,551
Total	2,265	290	528	3,083

<sup>3</sup>As licensed by the State of Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living.

### Hospice Care within 30 Days of Death

In 2019, 2,646 Vermonters received hospice in the 30 days prior to their death. In 2020, 2,955 received hospice care within 30 days of death. The proportion of Vermont deaths receiving hospice care has increased consistently since 2011, when 34% of deaths reported hospice care. In 2019 and 2020 the proportion of deaths receiving hospice care was similar, 47% and 48%, respectively (Figure 3).

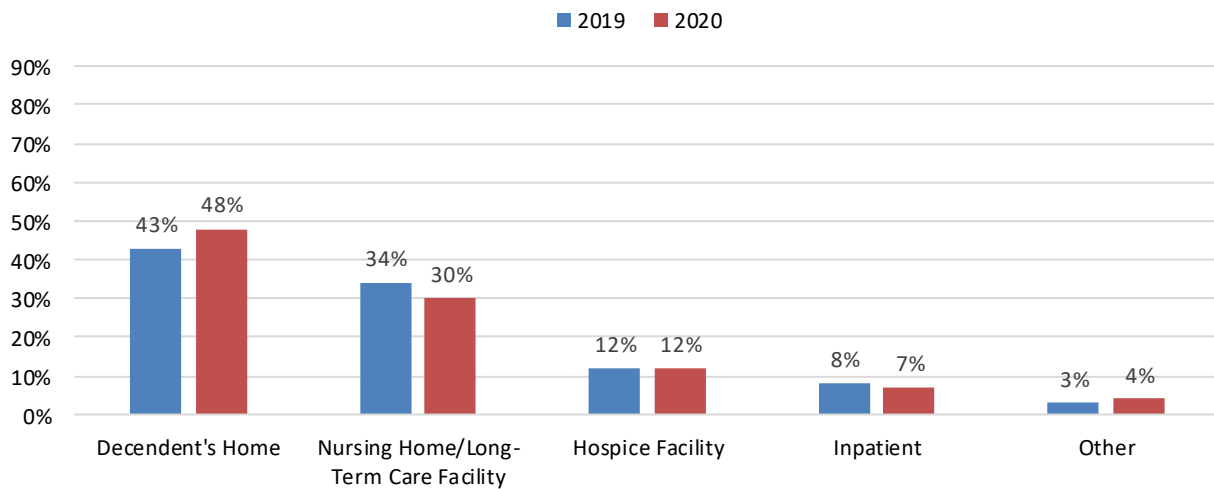
Figure 3: Received Hospice<sup>4</sup> in 30 Days Prior to Death  
Vermont Deaths, 2011-2020



<sup>4</sup>Includes approximately two percent of decedents each year with an unknown hospice status in the 30 days prior to death.

Of Vermont deaths that received hospice care in the past 30 days, more than three-quarters died either in their home (48% in 2020) or a nursing home or long-term care facility (30%). An additional 12% died in a hospice facility and seven percent died as inpatients in the hospital. Few died in other locations (4%), an intensive care unit (<1%), an emergency room (<1%), or were dead on arrival (<1%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Place of Death  
Vermont Deaths Who Received Hospice Care in Past 30 Days



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<sup>5</sup>May include deaths that should have been reported under one of the other categories.

## **Summary**

The percent of Vermont deaths occurring outside of the hospital setting continues to increase. In 2011, 61% of all Vermont deaths occurred outside of the hospital setting compared to 74% in 2020. Deaths occurring in the decedent's home have also increased – now comprising half (51%) of all out-of-hospital deaths in Vermont.

The number of Vermont deaths occurring in hospice also continues to increase, from 120 in 2011 to 344 in 2020. Similarly, those receiving hospice care in the 30 days prior to death has increased in the past 10 years – from 34% in 2011 to 48% in 2020. Most of those receiving hospice care in the past 30 days die at their home (48% in 2020) or in a nursing home or long-term care facility (30%). Twelve percent die in a hospice facility.